1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

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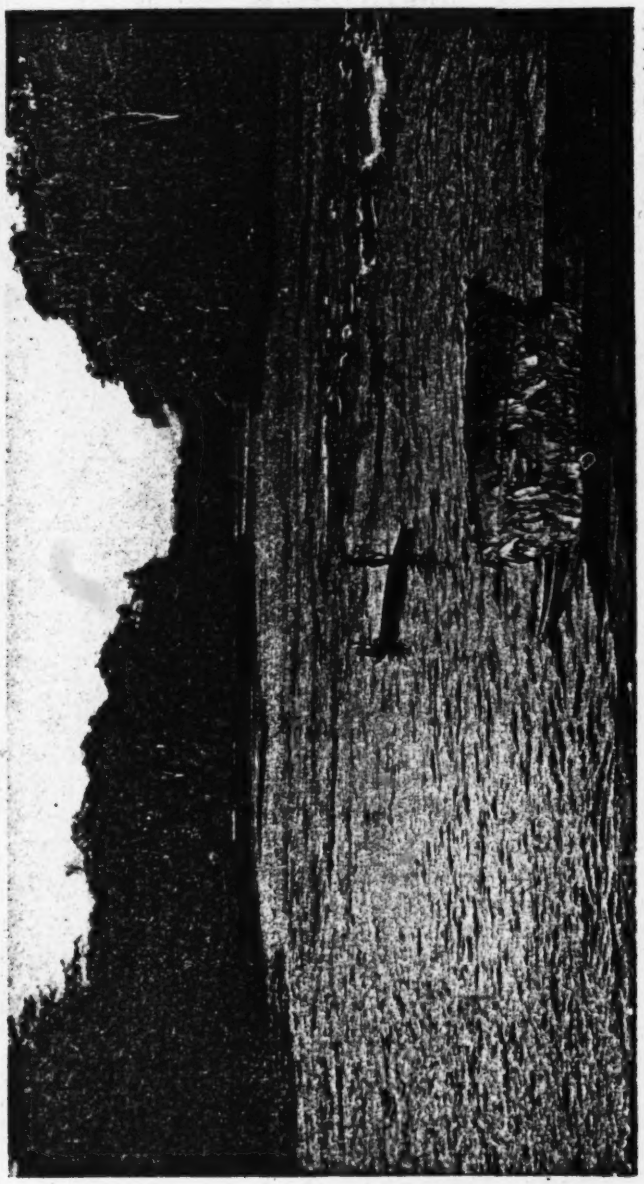

(Frontispiece)

The Saramacca River below the Mamadam falls.

[Frontispiece]

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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Chapter II

WHILE THE RIVER WAS HIGH

I

501 313 NOW this was a busy time of the year, and the river so full of canoes that a man floating down a lumber raft to the railhead might expect to meet ten or twelve dugouts in a day.

221 Men in laden corials were returning from the French side for the harvest festivals. They had been away eighteen months or longer, and now they were coming back to burn new rice and cassava fields for their women, and to beget new children. When the harvesting was done was a fine time for love, and a woman with a child in her womb was the very luckiest for planting a field. These returning men, in the prime of life, with powerful bodies and muscles that were as so many great snakes coiling and uncoiling underneath the gleaming moist skins were deferential toward strangers. For it would have been unseemly to thrust at the first comer their adventures on the Marowyne River, and a man who was returning with many possessions had to exercise particular care that he angered neither men nor gods. Yet among themselves they could not keep from a certain amount of swagger.

"Ai ba! Ai mati!" they exclaimed to each other in reply to the most casual comment. "Indeed, brother! Yes, friend!" This was no more than the mode of address of the [576] Awka people who live along the Marowyne, but "Ai ba! Ai mati!" stood for the password of the larger outside

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-S (1928-1929) 1934
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Village elders on a ceremonial visit.

[Facing P. 24]

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
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recognized the coat of a village chief, and by the size of the boat he knew that it belonged to the upper river, far, far beyond the stretches he had yet penetrated.

He spoke the greeting in the faintest of whispers, out of deference to a man of age and rank, and stopped his boat, for this village belonged to his own clan, and it was here that he would get from his mother's sister the cassava bread which she had got ready for his journey up river. He got out of his boat gently; decorum demanded that he subdue his energy before the man of position. His palms rested on his knees for an instant, as he stood slightly inclined before the older man, and what questions he answered, he did in speech which was punctuated with the ceremonial stammering demanded by the occasion. He had put his toga-like cloth over him and stood hesitating whether or not to take his paddle to the village with him, for he was so well known here that this settlement was almost as familiar to him as his own. But at last he leaned down and took up his paddle. This mature formality, in a village where he was still often looked upon as a boy, was prompted perhaps by this meeting with the chief, or by the new feeling of confidence he had, since he was taking the Bakra's boat up the river. But here he was, going up the embankment with the firm, slow step of the stranger.

The old chief had already started, having first made his sacrifice of rum to the spirit of his boat by squirting it over the finely carved head which appeared in relief on the prow. And now, as he guided his canoe with the sure strokes of his large steering paddle, he sang his prayer.

"*Kediamo, Kediampon,*
Mother of the River,
Sacred ancestors, and my a'ka,
I am taking this journey down the river,
I am going to the city,
Grant that I travel in safety,
Grant that the trip be joyous,
Grant that I meet with friends,

Herskovits & Herskovits 2-6 (1933-1939) 1934
Bush Negroes
Saramacca

looking out on the river. Whether it was a gesture that he would sing no more, or not, we could not say, but when he turned again to us he looked thoughtful. "White man, how far away is Africa? Would they kill me if I went there? Could I get a woman, if I went there?"

We sent him some food to his boat as an expression of hospitality, and word came back that when we had done eating, he would himself come and thank us. When he did come, it was to speak his thanks and to say goodbye, and he did not come alone. With him was the young man who was his traveling companion, and this young man carried gifts to us. Bayo, who had arrived a short time before, received the gifts of fig bananas and rice for us, as was the custom of these people, for to have given or received a gift in person would have been the way of a boor, just as it would have been bad form to stand about and watch us eat.

The leave-taking ritual, as that of greeting, is as formalized as a litany and almost as solemn.

"*Adiasi, adiosio—wake bon, yere. Tan bon*—Goodbye, travel well, hear? Keep well." Ajako carefully laid away his top cloth in his woven closed basket, straightened his loin cloth, and paddled away briskly from the landing.

Later, boats pulled up bringing the Gankwe men.

"Sedefo, we have a fine boat for you. It's large, and it will take a great deal of load. It's a new boat, just come down from top-side."

The men busied themselves with bringing our provisions from the shelter to the landing place so that the loading might begin. A tent had been made of palm leaves for the boat in which we ourselves were traveling, so that we might be shielded from the glare of the open river, from sunstroke and the sudden tropical downpours, and the men decided to load this boat first.

Now there was a murmur among the Gankwe men. Sedefo was passing his hands over the new boat, as though it were a human form, touching its "head," running his hands over the "ribs," the "belly." Then he balanced himself in it, and shook his head.

Herskovits & Herskovits R-6 (1932-1933) 1934
Bush Negroes
Surinam

501 609 "It is not good," he said aloud to us. "Its balance is not right. Look, it rolls . . . and besides, I have a kunu. I will go up in my own boat."

And so it was. Sedefo took his own boat up river, and another Gankwe boat was obtained, and there were four boats instead of three, and eight paddlers instead of six.

"Ya-hail Kunu is costly for the white man as well as the black," Bayo said to Bibifo, his great-grandfather, for it was not his father, nor his grandfather, as he had later promised, who appeared to steer the boat in which Bayo was taking the Bakra and his woman up the river.

3

508 484 Bayo was at his best on the river. He loved it, and it treated him well. In the prow of the boat, swinging his pole-stick hand over hand, he steadily urged the boat upstream against the current, and sang as he poled.

533 541 "*A-yai-yo,*
A-yai-yea,
Money is finished in Surinam
Lower Cayenna took it!
A-yai-yo,
A-yai-yea."

[533] Over and over he repeated the seketi, with tantalizing variations in rhythm and melody on the traditional air, to which he knew so many sets of words. In and out went the pole-stick. In, until it struck the sand with a soft caressing glide, then a hard push, and three short steps back along the boat until Bayo's hand reached the upper end of the wood, and a final thrust, then pull, and over, and in, and once again the three short steps.

The other boats had got ahead. In the distance close to the bank they followed one another.

"*Mbwogu, mbwogu*—Hurry!" said old Bibifo in back.

Bayo turned and grinned. "*Ai, mbwogu, mati, mbwogu*—Yes, hurry, friend, hurry," he twitted his great-grandfather,

J: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
Bill Bush Negroes Bill
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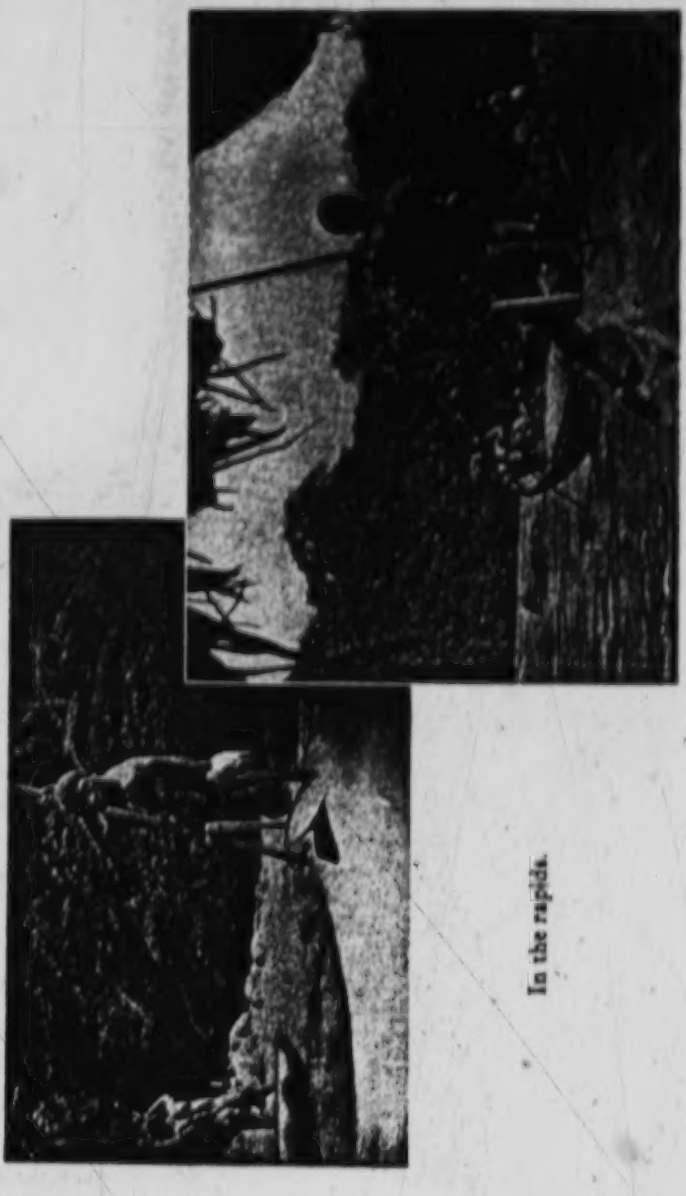

In the rapids.

[Facing P. 58]

Herskovits & Herskovits B-5 (1928-1929) 1934
Bush Negroes
Saramacca

Chapter IV

KUNU

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EVENTS on the river, as it turned out, showed Sedefo's fears of the large boat that rolled, and of his kunu, only too well grounded. It was to him that there occurred the only mishaps of the entire up-river journey. That what happened proved to be no more serious was, according to the general understanding of our men, to be credited to that personal boat of Sedefo's, whose spirit he had tried on many journeys, and had propitiated with offerings of sacred rum and prayer.

It was also whispered among our men that the Bakra's magic from Africa—a wholly imaginary thing, but which explained to the Bush Negroes our ability to do or withstand things that were not expected of us—had something to do with it, too. For kunu was kunu, and the one in Sedefo's family had shown its hand but too many times of late. Had not the family lost another man only a few months earlier? Had not Zimbi just been buried? And Zimbi's wife, dead less than a year before.

Thanks, then, to his boat, Sedefo's life had been spared. It was not for nothing that he had taken every care when making this boat, that before he had felled the log out of which he had made it, he had addressed himself to the spirit of the tree, explaining that he had need of its wood for a boat, that he would therefore cut it down. He had rendered his thanks for the spirit's permission, as

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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was needful, and since then he had often made prayer to his boat, and the boat had carried him safely.

But this is what happened.

On our fourth day up the river we were on our way early, because the men said the falls ahead were difficult, and they wanted to be through them before they stopped to eat. It took us more than an hour to pass the rapids, for the land rose higher and higher, and the water cascaded from one ledge to the next, often in curving channels of swift water that were too deep to allow the use of pole-sticks, and too swift for the paddles to cope with.

There were also those stretches which were without the piled rocks to give the men a footing for pulling the boats over, so that a rope had to be used, and the going was slow and treacherous. Each of the dugouts had this long rope fastened to its prow, and ahead, on the first ledge, were two or more of the men, the other end of the rope in hand, waiting for the signal to start hauling, while holding on to the sides of the boat as they swam were as many men as could be spared, so that if the rope broke, the boat would not be swept downstream, to go crashing against the rocks. These men who faced the fast water of their river, worked as though at the sight of it their Kromanti fighting spirit had entered their bodies, as if not men were there, but an impersonal force pitting itself against the force of the river. Even where the water was not too deep, and they could haul the boat, care could not be slackened for an instant—a wrong turn, and the boat would be capsized, or, what would be as serious, the impact of a rock might cut a gash in its side or bottom, filling it with water faster than they could manage to bring it to a bank. But at last the sound of the falling water was behind us, and the men, once they were in the still water again, went on with the casualness that they fell into with their river when the danger was over, and cast about for a pleasant place to stop and eat.

All at once there was a shout from behind us. Each boat echoed it shrilly. What's that? Whose boat?

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-8 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

133 But now a soft haze floated over stream and bush. To the right was the Ingi Sopi channel, dropping so sheer that not even an unloaded dugout could make its way up the rapids, not a single log of wood could be floated down. To the left was the Mamadam, a smoother, more rounded slope. It was up these falls that our boats would later be hauled.

501 484 Below us on the rocks our men were unloading the corials and carrying the provisions along the narrow trodden path to the topmost ledge of the falls, where the empty dugouts would be reloaded after they had been taken up through the streaming water.

133 Beyond lay the full stretch of the river. As far as the eye could see, there were none of the channels, none of the many islands which are met with everywhere on this river from its very headwaters to the reaches of the tidal belt near the coast. About us was a stillness which the very roar [136] of the water heightened. The parrots had long ago passed on in pairs. The butterflies would wait for the sun before they went winging from the east bank to the west. This was a moment of pure interlude. No sun, no breeze, no 080 sound, no glow. This was the moment before the fragmentary dawn would end, before the haze would lift, this the moment when night, having met day, as the Bush Negroes said, was disappearing from sight.

"It is fine here, ai!" Bayo called to us, as he walked on [482] with a large canister balanced on his head, making his way up the rocks with the sureness and ease of one who is strolling down a lane with the consciousness of a pleasant encounter at the next turning.

798 346 As soon as the mist had lifted, we walked up the rocks to the shrine. Facing us and the lower river, a tall, slender pole, weathered to a pale silver, stood higher than the roof of the shrine in front of which it was planted. At its top were the crude outlines of a head and, some three feet from its base, two side pieces were nailed to it and grounded at an angle to steady the image against the onrush of a sudden wind. A short distance from the pole was the shrine

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

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Just above the Mamadam.

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Detail of boat—feline head on crosspiece.

[Facing P. 84]

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

574 609 In his own house, Fandya continued to urge our staying. "Ame'ika Fandya," he said—the year before he had given his own name to the white man—"remain with us tonight and tomorrow. I am an old man. I would like to know that you saw a dance in my village. When you go to the Neng'e country, I would like you to say that Captain Fandya knew how to treat a stranger who came as a friend. Last year when you were here you said you would come with your wife. You have come. Your wife has come. Last year you came, and since then all has gone well in our village. Today there are not many people about. The women are [462] away in the fields harvesting the rice; the men are in the bush hauling lumber. But tomorrow night the women will come in from the planting grounds, because the day after they may not work in the fields, and tomorrow, too, the men will come. Stay and see our dances."

And the bassia, the man second in command, said, [789] "Mati, last year I took an obia against the evil eye from my own door and gave it to you to hang over yours, that enemies entering your house might not bring in with them bad magic. All has gone well with you. Stay. The gods have shown they favor our friendship."

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361 The will of the Gankwe men had, however, prevailed, and we reached the village of Pa'aba that day in good time. It was one of the largest on the river. In front of the azang ●501 which guarded the road new boats lay on their sides, and farther up the path were others in the making, some black inside with charring, others huge hollowed-out logs, like gigantic drums, waiting for the hand that would set their pulses beating. These boats were as large as any we had seen on the river, as large as the boat Sedefo had rejected because it rolled and he had to think of his kunu.

[556] Kasanya said, "This is a prosperous village. They make the best boats on the river here."

And Bayo said, "Ai, this village has strong men."

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

THE PROVISION GROUND

We watched Sedefo and his pole-man adjust their ceremonial top cloths, and, paddles in hand, start up the path, as we joined Kasanya and the other men who were examining the boats. Kasanya, an excellent woodworker himself, ran his hands over the sides of the dugouts much as though he were touching things which held life inside them.

"There is much work making a boat. One the size of this needs cunning. It isn't anybody can do it. First the bark is cut away. Then you outline a space here on top, and with your machete you cut away inside. When you have done this, it is only the beginning."

He led us to just such a log, and then to another on which burning had been done. "You can only burn very little at a time, and you must fire carefully, carefully. You make a small fire and char the wood—you make a fire, and quench it, make a fire and quench it. So it is done. Then you take wet leaves and put them into the boat, and on the leaves you place live coals so that the steam can soften the grain of the wood. When the wood is softened, it can be forced into shape. Sticks are wedged in to make the opening hold. Slowly the log begins to have the lines of a boat."

But all this we were made to see called for the most exacting patience as well as skill, for any misjudged pressure might split the wood.

"Many moons come up and die before a log is fashioned into a boat, and even then, there is still the carving to be done on stern and prow; the crosspieces to be put in, the sides built up. It is not a thing a child undertakes, Bak'a."

Now Bayo, who had listened attentively to Kasanya's explanation of how boats were made, found a pretext to bring us back to the water, and soon he took up the talk of boats.

"Boats are like people. See, this we call a head. At the other end are the buttocks. Here are the ribs, here inside the belly. The crosspieces are the knees. Feet? Ma' Neng'e! What would a boat want with feet?"

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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"In the true, true Saramacca . . . "

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House of one recently dead.

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The approach to the Tapa Wata falls.

[p. 170 (A)]

[Facing page 170]

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramacca

and so close that our hands, moving about to find a rest, touched its top, and sounded an involuntary rhythm, was an apinti drum. We exclaimed at its beauty, for in form and carving it rivaled the one we had admired in the council house of Granman Yankuso, and we were determined to try to buy it. But we turned our conversation to other things. A stranger in this bush soon learns from the Bush Negroes to broach an important request gently, remembering the cautioning proverb spoken by the chameleon.

We talked of carving, of the white man's coming back some year when the rains were heavy to sit by and watch the men make paddles and benches, so that he might learn, as children learn.

The captain was politely skeptical. It took a Saramacca hand to do this work. But he smiled, "Ma kye, if you have the gods anything is possible."

"That's a fine paddle in the corner."

He brought it out, and we admired it. Would he sell it to us?

"You must ask its owner."

"Didn't you make it, captain?"

"Yes, but it is not mine to sell. I gave it to my wife." He would see, however, if she wanted to sell it. He would himself go and call her.

As he went, he gave us the paddle that we might examine it. We ran our hands over the smooth top, the design, the beveled blade. It was not so tall as the paddles used by the men, nor was its blade so broad as those used in steering the great boats through the rapids. In form, it was quite different from the round-bladed type used by the Indians of the region, for it was slender and came to a sharp point, and at the other end the carving formed a crutch-shaped hold into which the hand fitted.

We studied this carving. Parts of the design had meaning for us because of their realistic treatment. The motifs of others were recognizable to us from explanations we had been given of other carvings. But there were still details

1tHerskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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of design which only the carver himself could name, or someone who knew the symbolism of the art tradition in which this paddle was carved.

During our first visit to these people we had been completely balked by the unwillingness of the Bush Negroes to discuss their carvings. In answer to our questions we got delightful evasions, but with the coming of Bayo to our base camp, carrying his crudely carved stool, we learned enough to make it clear that there was a great deal of symbolism in the carving of the Bush Negroes and, as our knowledge of these symbols increased, it became increasingly easier to get descriptions of carvings in terms of the meanings and values these held for the Bush Negroes themselves.

Now, sitting in the workshop of one of the finest of Saramacca carvers, the captain of Ma'lobbi, we traced those parts of the design which we knew, mentioning their significance to the men who were about.

"There are two snakes," we said, pointing to the realistically entwined bodies which formed the upper portion of the hand grip, ending at the top with recognizable heads, and with mouths held open, which supported symmetrical figures of the top of the paddle.

"Aboma snakes," one man said, verifying to himself our statement.

"These," we continued, "are the teeth of the great lizard—*bamba tande*—and this part below the hand-grip reaching part way toward the blade is a carved chain, and you call it *moni mo' muye*—money is more than woman."

The men laughed. "Awa, so it is. The man knows about Saramacca carving."

And one of them took up the explanation, pointing out the two symmetrical figures which were posed opposite each other above the mouths of the snakes. "These are monkeys. They are women monkeys. No, don't call them just keskesi, their name is makaka," he went on, giving us the name of the species, when we spoke the word for monkey. "See the ears, the heads, the breasts. Ai, I

1: Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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society, the "Congo" sticks, as they were called here, or the "fighting" sticks. 532

The carvings, however, which we were admiring in the house of the captain of Ma'lobbi were for secular use. The Bush Negro craftsman brought to the ornamenting of his paddles and his canoe seats, to his house posts, and particularly to the door of his treasure house, to his women's combs, and trays, and food stirrers, and clothes beaters all the traditional skill and patience. But the exceptional carver brought also the cunning in his fingers which his gods had given to him and only to few others on the river. Such a man was the captain of Ma'lobbi. Into the traditional designs such a man wove lines for the love of seeing them grow under his hand, for there were always single motifs which the people versed in the symbolism of the art would describe as "beautiful," as having no meaning. Yet with few exceptions the massing of outlines in a unified design bore on fertility. Men and women alone or together, and male and female animals were represented in all but occasional pieces. [501]

The Bush Negro artist was a man of consequence on the river. His companions admired his skill, and the young women were proud to have his handiwork. If he showed his gifts early, he was at an advantage in courting a girl of an influential family. The girl's mother, who shared in the gifts of her daughter's suitor, might be willing to overlook other less advantageous traits in the man or in his family, while the girl's uncles would not be loath to have such a man in their family to teach his art to his sons, who would be their successors. 532 554 584

On several occasions we were permitted to see how very deeply this appreciation of fine carving went. As in the instance of the paddle we had acquired from the wife of the captain of Ma'lobbi, it had happened often that the consent of the woman to sell a given piece was necessary before any trading could take place. Sometimes we traded directly with the woman, sometimes she asked her husband, or her brother, or her son, as the more worldly 432 562 439

1:Herskovits & Herskovits E-5 (1928-1929) 1934
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
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532 fascinated. It showed, in its purest form, the retention of the African mask-like head. Sometimes on the prow of a boat we would see in cruder form the outlines of a mask, and once an old woman came with a food stirrer to us. Its handle ended in a knob which with a few strokes of the knife had been formed into a double representation of the human [191] head, a perfect parallel to the type of mask that is associated with the people of the Ivory Coast.

532 Aside from the decorated apinti drum, only some of the 191 workaday art forms of Africa—combs, paddles, mortars, among other such objects—were retained. For their decoration the designs that in Africa had been cut into the base of figures or about the borders of masks had been remembered and reinterpreted in terms of the ancestral cults. And from those memories the Bush Negroes had developed the unique art which is theirs.

532 Thus, in the main, the art was symbolic, and many of the 181 designs represented the urge for reproduction. Some 84 stemmed from the fertility cult, though not entirely of it. There was, for example, the double-bladed food stirrer, [626] which was given by a man to his wife with a curse woven into its curves for the woman if she committed adultery.

532 There were carvings that did not deal with sex at all. On the lower river we sat on the shore as a canoe came up. Prow and stern were carved. On one of the seats was a representation of the head of a feline, done with the utmost realism.

"You have *tigri*?" we asked the man, as we bargained for the seats.

"I will sell you this, but do not ask me what it means."

[501] The bird-headed paddles were also examples of this kind. When laid on their sides, they showed the form of the parrot, or whatever bird they represented—the exaggerated beak, the head, the neck, the wings, and the feet. The [791] design called *Alukutu Bolo*, an emblem of those who could see into the future, was engraved on many benches on the upper river in particular, and these carvings were parted with only with the greatest reluctance, lest we try

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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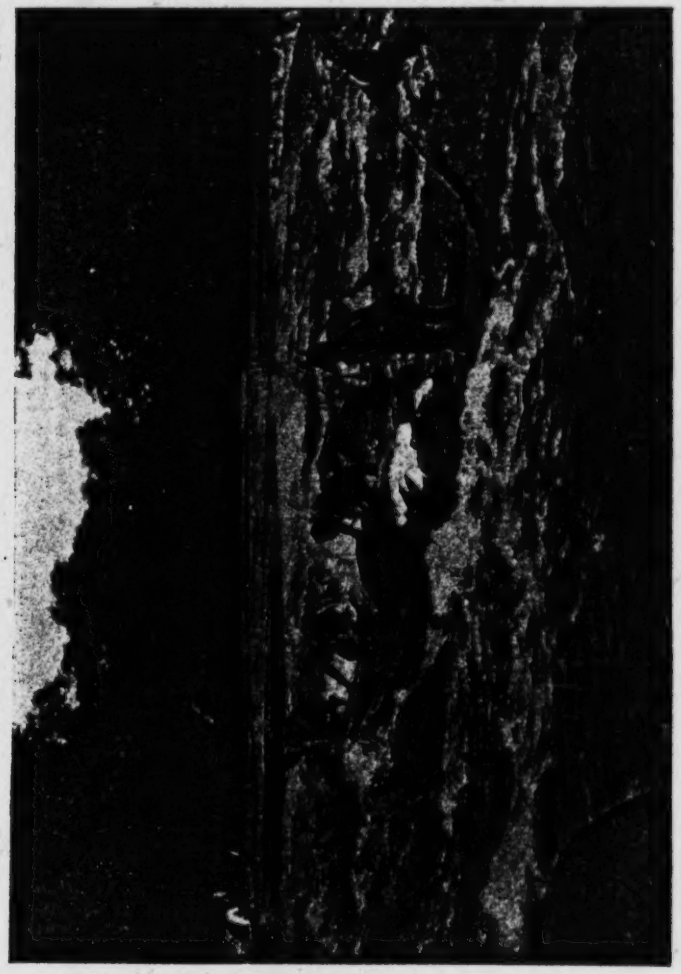

Bush Negroes Paddling a Loaded Dug-Out Canoe Up the Rapids.
Photo by Curiel

[Facing p. 12]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

The blacks are proud of their water skill. Upsetting a canoe 484 648 501
or drowning a passenger are disgraces that no man can ever live down. But they are rare occurrences. The Indians of this part of the continent, not nearly so skilful, use a different style of canoe and paddle. Djuka paddles are hewn with a bush-knife from a solid plank of hard wood, and finished off [322]
with an ordinary pocket-knife. The handle is frequently pierced with delicate ornamental work, the entire piece beautifully balanced to handle easily. The men's paddles are as tall as they are, but the women's are shorter and more elaborate. Tiny ones are given children as soon as they are big enough to hold them, so that the Djuka's water skill is the result of a lifetime on the river.

All the boats are dugouts; no canvas or bark canoe would 396
last long in these rapids. They are manufactured out of big [501]
trees, which are felled and allowed to season. Then the centres are hollowed out with fire and adze; nothing is left but the shell of the trunk, with perpendicular sides and a rounded bottom. This is filled with water, into which hot rocks are dropped. The heated water softens the wood, enabling thwarts to be thrust in, forcing the gunwales apart. The ends are then symmetrically curved up and are often carved. Seats, as well as bow and stern pieces, are often carefully decorated. The entire boat has a distinct West African style. When com- 501
pleted it is from eight to forty feet long. Ours has a large [17]
sunshade of thatched grass near the stern, because the white 648
man is too soft to endure the sun's rays. Under the shade we have a camp-chair, a little comfort for the long trip. The

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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648 other canoe is entirely open, the Negroes being more hardy than we.

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685 Stealing a corial is to the Bush Negro what stealing a horse was to the early plainsmen of the American frontier: a capital crime. So much of the Bush Negro life is on the water that no man can get along without a canoe for any length of time. There are only hunting trails through the jungle, and traffic by preference goes along the river. In spite of the luxuriant jungle, a man left in the bush without food is liable to starve, as a frontiersman left on the plains without a mount was considered to be as good as dead.

Next to Dutch Guiana is French Guiana, a penal colony. Here large numbers of convicts are imprisoned. There are also men known as *libérés*—exiles who are at liberty within the colony, but forbidden to leave it. Many succeed in escaping desperately into the bush. They must obtain canoes, for travelling any distance overland is practically impossible, due to the heavy growth. If the fugitive cannot purchase one at the Negro villages, the only alternative is to steal it. Such thieves are pursued relentlessly by the Djukas, and killed on sight. Bloody tales are told in Paramaribo of hand-to-hand struggles to horrid deaths, between black man and convict fighting for life, in the dim blue light of the jungle day, in the unknown interior of Surinam.

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

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Bush Negro Group Showing Unfinished Dug-Out Canoe Hewn with Axe.
Negro by Gardé

[Facing p. 40]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

obeiahs, house gods, fetish houses, menstrual huts, and matrilineal system of inheritance are all to be found as ancient customs among the forest tribes of the West Coast. Other details, such as the use of chickens for sacrificial animals, the huts with their rectangular walls, the manufacture of butter from the palm worm, the sacredness of snakes and alligators, the use of drums for religious supplication, and the beating of them with the hand instead of with a stick as the Indians do, are also customs which are similar to West African customs and probably derived from them. The impaled turtle-shell on a staff, the badge of the witch doctor's profession, represents the symbol for the female genitalia among some West African tribes. The Bush Negroes' boats and paddles are typically African in design. The *awasa* dance of the Saramaccaners was borrowed from the Aucaners, among whom it is a direct West African survival.

From the study of these culture survivals among the Djuka tribes it can be seen that most of the jungle civilization of the Bush Negroes is derived from their West African ancestry, modified here and there by contact with the Indians of their new home. The remainder of the material culture of the Bush Negroes is borrowed from the white settlements along the coast, from which gunpowder, fish-hooks, bush-knives, and other articles filter upstream.

[p. 192 is blank]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Saramaccaner

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Pot Stirrers and Canoe Paddle Handle.
Saramaccaner Tribe.

[Facing p. 196 (A)]

2:Kahn D-5 (1922-1930) 1931
SR8 Bush Negroes SR8

hung up on a peg. The canoe paddles are actually employed every day on the river, and the flails beat the day's wash of soiled togas and coyos.

Since it is taboo to sit on the ground, a large number of stools are made, pierced and decorated, with now and then a tiny cabinet inside them. Wooden locks that actually work are seen on the doors, especially in Aucaner villages, guarding the treasures inside. These are West African survivals; the same type of device can be found in several parts of the Old Continent. They are huge affairs often two feet in length. Door sills and door posts, bows and sterns of canoes, canoe seats and calabash gourds (occasionally decorated by a woman) are all embellished with ornamentation of great intricacy. It is amazing that these designs could be wrought without preliminary designing, which would seem to be necessary, but so far as we were able to observe there is no conscious planning before the carving begins.

The symbolism employed in these pieces of sanni is limited to a few conventionalized motifs. Moreover, there is a variation in the symbolism peculiar to the individual artist, which is not comprehensible solely from an examination of the piece itself. Unless one can locate the original carver, it is impossible, for the most part, to be certain what the symbols mean. The same motif will be differently interpreted by different natives, and often has no objective meaning. It is therefore impossible to undertake an elaborate interpretation of Djuka symbolism.

There are a few outstanding designs found on a large

B: Custer--i P-5 (ca. 1857)-1866 SRB Irish Negroes SRB

[Frontispiece]

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Irish Negroes in the Colony of Surinam

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[501]

/3 cont./

request the captain residing there, Kwasi jenni, to man all the available korjalen (3) and to send them around to the camps of

3. Small vessels made out of tree trunks.

the Bush Negroes, in order to notify all the Aukaners /Aucaners/ /4/ in that district that I, sojourning entirely by myself among them, wished to see them all together so as to have the opportunity, in the place to be determined by them and in accordance with their manner and customs, to take the oath of agreement to remain at all times faithful to one another.

Three days were spent in deliberations and consultations among various captains, council members, and elders, before I could succeed in obtaining their consent for this.

[527] Finally, however, it was decided to have the agreement ceremony take place on Friday (a day that is holy among them), when the sun reached its midday point.

On this day, around eleven o'clock in the forenoon, one of the oldest and most influential among them took a clean teacup, put in it some dram mixed with herbs, and took a few finely ground plants which he moistened with river water and squeezed over the cup.

I and seven of the most important people then had three small slashes cut into the right hand with a razor. The blood from this, having been taken up with a little flock of cotton, was also squeezed into the cup, and the cotton washed out with river water and wrung out so often that no more signs of blood showed in it. The one and the other having been thoroughly stirred in the cup, the latter was placed on a stool in the open air. At twelve o'clock exactly, a great number of men, women, and children gathered around the stool on which the cup stood, by the side of which they placed me.

Three gunshots were fired. Among all those present a profound silence reigned, whereupon the cup was offered, first to me and then to the other seven persons whose blood was mingled with mine, in order to drink a draught from the contents, whereupon it had to go around to all the men so that, however little, they would

/24 cont./

Chapter XVI

Manner of Traveling, and so forth

484 Their manner of traveling is very simple. Usually wife and children accompany them; very rarely do they go alone. They never take along more food provisions than they consider to be strictly necessary, in order not to have any burden of great baggage, for which their small, narrow vessels made out of a tree trunk are in any case little suited.

484 411 As primitive people they are able to withstand deprivations very well, but nonetheless they always take care to be armed when they go traveling. These hunting and war weapons consist of guns, powder, lead, bow and arrows, as well as a machete and an ax.

484 505 [501] [372] Frequently they can continue on these journeys in a small, narrow corjaal (canoe) for weeks on end; there is, of course, a great lack of comforts, but they are contented so long as they merely have a little place in the corjaal where they can maintain a flaming fire, which serves for the preparation of foods and because the Negro generally finds in it a, for him, pleasant sociability. Their journeys are not of great significance; they never extend across the sea, which is the case among the various Indian tribes.

/25/

Chapter XVII

Manner of Waging War, Ceremonies in connection with Concluding Peace and Alliance

721 War is rarely waged by or among them, but when it does take place, their conflict bears the character of a thirst for revenge, treachery, and hatred.

728 [273] At the conclusion of peace, the subject party pledges itself to satisfy the demands of the victors, provided these are mutually judged as fair. As part of the ceremonies observed on this occasion there is also a large consumption of dram.

/29 cont./

439 Thus it is known to me that they have gone to one or another plantation in order to sell timber, which they tie to their korjalen or canoes after having made it into rafts with bush ropes (tough liana stalks), and have misled the Europeans in a scandalous manner.

[283]

[284] They make their squared timber into rafts in the following manner. Four thick strong round timbers are laid crosswise and tied together, two above and two under the korjaal; the timber is pushed in between these and fastened, so that the whole thing forms a firm long rectangle with the korjaal in the middle /30/ with which they make long journeys from the upper to the lower rivers. This timber that is made into rafts and carried along by the korjaal is called kokroko; they tie light and floating wood to long beams with bush rope (called boesitetei) (1); thus tied to the

[283]

1. From the copaiva.

heavy wood they drag it along down the river.

Chapter XXI

Understanding among Themselves

114 133 Not long ago I found myself among them on the river Upper Commewijne on the Tempati (a branch of the river named, on the left going upstream; this branch runs into the mountains, which are reported as ruddle mountains /roodenberg/.

114 648 Residing among them, I made many attempts to induce them to track down those in hiding who did not belong to their tribes and fugitives of a later time, and to make known to them that by governmental decree in the course of the year 1863, before the emancipation, a general amnesty regarding them had been issued, so that they could return to their former dwelling places without fear of punishment. The reason that induced me to acquaint them with this was that I saw in the return of these persons

B /510 cont./
581 relatives, nor any power of the man over the woman, nor even
B household cohabitation. The man and the woman each reside in
591 the village of their maternal kin. The man goes to live with his
593 wife from time to time, providing her with the imported commodities that she needs, notably salt, kerosene, cloth, and utensils, and felling trees for the clearings which she will exploit
B for the benefit of the household.
586 Divorce is entirely free. Unions are not very stable, mainly on account of the woman. Numbers of women are divorced four to five times during their lives.

B The grand man, chief of the tribe, exercises over the Boni a
643 power which is more religious than political.

B The Boni are a pirogue-people. For more than a century they
433 have been living by using their canoes for the benefit of gold-seekers
178 and exploiting miners. The decline of gold extraction is depriving
[501] them more and more of their traditional resources. Some of them
[167] are emigrating temporarily to the coastal lumberyards. But all of them remain faithful to their villages and to their customs.

R /511/
101 The Oayana Indians (Roucouyennes /Rucuyen/). These Indians of the
177 Caribe /Carib/ ethnic group have had only a few direct contacts
144 with European civilization and still represent without alteration the
R human type which populated Guiana before the arrival of the
161 Europeans. On encountering the Refugee Blacks, the Indians of the Guianese forest have been steadily and rapidly declining. Estimated
R at 30,000 at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Indians
101 of French Guiana are now no more than about a thousand. In
162 addition there must be included in this number 700 persons (Galibi and
131 Arawak) who have been protected by their habitat in the savannas of the coast where malaria is less deadly than in the interior.
R
175 The accounts of travelers and the censuses made notably in
161 1730, 1759, 1787, and 1815 allow one to follow with precision this destruction of the autochthonous population since the first settlement of the Europeans in Guiana (2).

2. Dr. André Sausse, op. cit., pp. 67-98.

/8 cont./

241 experience of the American Indians, which seem the only utilizable
177 ones in the interior of the country.

Thus these populations which are so varied have in large measure the same agriculture and the same food.

241 Basic crops are manioc, consumed in the form of couac
[262] (flour roasted and granulated) which is the base food, the Indian yam, and tubers analogous to taro (dachine, "Caribbean cabbage").
[171] The Refugee Blacks plant mountain rice in addition. The Creoles do not plant rice but have on the other hand a greater variety of vegetables and fruits.

311 Men in Guiana live on the rivers; villages and cultivated
30 lands are to be found on their banks; everywhere else one finds
182 only the deserted forest; only Creole gold miners, constrained by their work, sometimes establish their villages far from watercourses.
181 The Refugee Blacks, like the Indians, love the rivers where they
182 find, along with water and light, the possibility of moving with-
171 out hindrance; they are a people of canoeists; their traditions are widely influenced by life on the river, and their mode of living finds in this a deep originality.

131 In fact, setting aside the gold miners' villages, we can say
133 that the populations of the Guianas living by exploitation of the
182 natural resources of the country have a linear habitat: it can be
171 estimated not in surface but in length, for it is limited to a band of one kilometer along each watercourse accessible to pirogues. These watercourses are limited in number, for one can take for granted that at a distance of some 20 kilometers from the source of each river, the congestion caused by fallen trees and parasitic vegetation prevents easy movement.

[161] Actually, considering the very low density of the population,
[226] the small rivers are scarcely utilized except as fishing places.

487 All the rivers are interrupted by falls and rapids which render
501 the use of large boats impossible. The pirogues of the Refugee

B 487 501 505

/8 cont./ The Pirogues of the Refugee Blacks, carrying a useful load of from 1,000 to 2,000 kilograms, are the normal means for provisioning the placers and European settlements of the Interior. The use of outboard motors on these small boats tends to become more general, but navigation remains difficult and dangerous and the Refugee Blacks continue to draw the essential part of their resources from these trips. /Fig. 1 appears here./

/9/ Populations

B F 162 648

The Maroni Basin is relatively populated if it is compared with the rest of Guiana. The population includes three human groups which are very different from one another and have absolutely no tendency to merge although they maintain friendly relations.

F 101 177 F 144

1) Creoles. This is the name of the colored persons who lead a life with individual characteristics and have adopted European forms of life in part, by contrast to the Refugee Blacks who live in tribes under the command of chiefs. African blood is dominant in the Creoles, especially among the gold miners.

F 131 361 161 463

In 1958 there were no more than about 800 Maroni Creoles, almost all gold miners or traders, grouped principally around the little Surinam mining center of Benzdorp; very small villages of gold miners are scattered along the principal tributaries of the Maroni, notably the Abounami, the Great and the Little Inini, the Waki.

F 167

The Maroni Creoles are nearly all foreigners, the great majority originally from the British West Indies, more specifically from Santa Lucia and Barbados; there are very few among them from the French West Indies or the Guianas.

F 197

All speak dialects with a French base, very close to one another but rather different from the very special patois of the

6:Hurault--10a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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Fig. 1. Boni type.

/facing p. 56/

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Fig. 13. Boni paddles.
At the right, for comparison, a Saramaka paddle.

6:Hurault--166a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/facing p. 114/

/.. a/

133
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226
501

Fig. 19. Fishing à la nivrée.

/132 cont./

868 [501] To this traditional knowledge, which remains indispensable, has been added for the past several years substantial knowledge of mechanics, because the use of outboard motors is becoming more and more common; this knowledge is transmitted in empirical fashion as it has been acquired. It must be recorded that the motors go and that they are well kept up.

86 The system of education employed by the Refugee Blacks is surely effective; their children are excessively turbulent and very difficult when they are in a group. When they are divided up individually in the midst of adults, they are placed under the best conditions for learning the techniques and traditions of their group.

429 The person charged with the education of a child does not willingly entrust him to another and takes him along whenever 513 he moves. However, by concern for propriety, the woman guardian sends the children she is raising to sleep in other houses on the days when her husband comes to visit her. Boys go to sleep at the home of a brother, an uncle, a comrade; the same for girls who have not yet reached puberty; but it is not the same for girls who have reached puberty; they are subjected to strict supervision.

648 This is one of the reasons why the Boni find it repugnant to 891 put their children in school (French school of Maripasoula, 156 Surinam school of Kotika). Without wishing to tackle here this sad problem to its fullest extent, we must state that this teaching, entirely inappropriate and dispensed by teachers who look down on the Refugee Blacks, has results nearly similar to those observed generally in Africa, the main one being to make the children strangers to their own families and misfits in their own country. There is practically no example of a case where the Boni nation has benefited from having one of its children go to school: if the child succeeds, he leaves for Paramaribo and never comes back again. If he fails, he then has much more

6:Hurault--265a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

/T.a/

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Fig. 25. The coffin is placed on board a canoe.

6:Hurault--412a K-5 (1948-1958) 1961 SR8 Bush Negroes SR8
Boni

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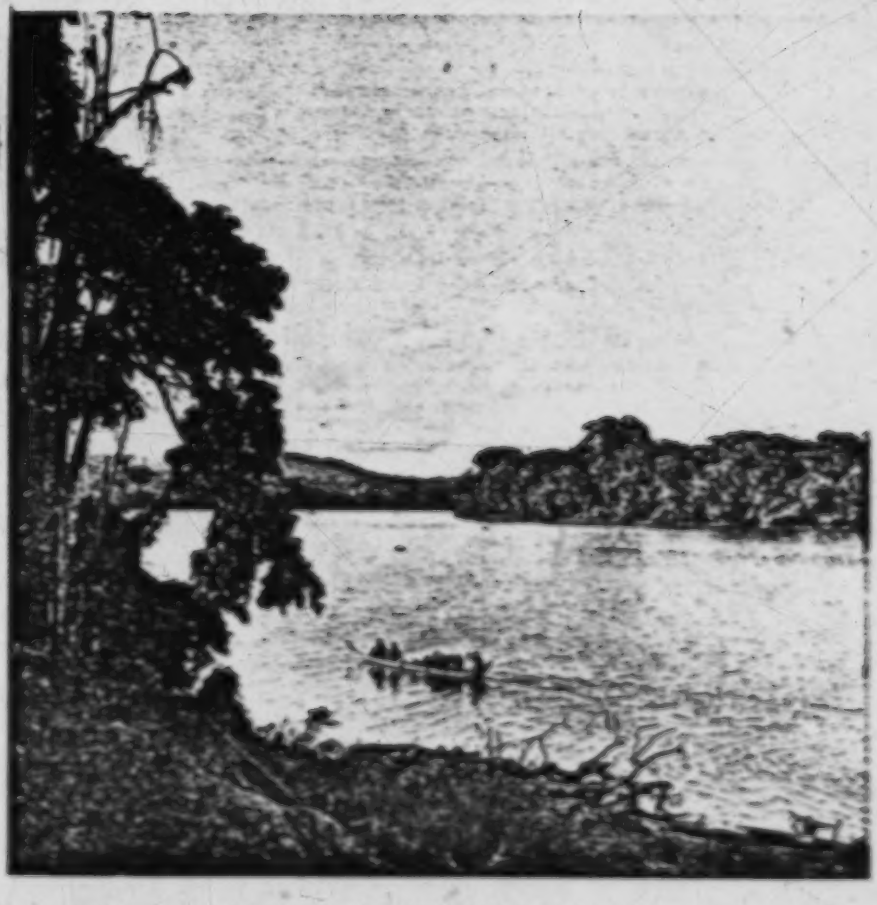

Fig. 29. The last trip of a dead person on the river.